GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:428
ANSWERED ON:25.04.2000
SWAMINATHAN COMMITTEE REPORT
SHEELA GAUTAM;SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Commission on Population Control chaired by Shri M.S. Swaminathan had presented its report in 1994;

(b) if so, whether the Commission, besides handing over the population control work to a separate Commission had made other recommendations as well;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the reasons for not taking any action on this report during the last five years?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE (SHRI N.T. SHANMUGAM)

(a)to(d): A statement is laid on the table of the Lok Sabha.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 428 FOR ANSWER ON 25-04-2000

(a) The Expert Group on Population Policy headed by Dr. Swaminathan submitted the Draft National Population Policy to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare during May 1994.

(b) Yes, Sir.

The Swaminathan Committee Report recommended the setting up of a Population and Social Development Commission (PSDC) which will function in a manner similar to other Commisions of Government with executive powers such as the Atomic Energy and Space Commissions. It will be headed by a full time Chairperson who will be an eminent social worker or a professional committed to the cause of population stabilisation and social development. The Chairperson will have the status of Union Cabinet Minister.There will be 4 whole time members who will have the status of Ministers of State. The Swaminathan Commission Report stated that the Commission will not duplicate the work of the Planning Commission.The Commission would play a complementary and supportive role by focussing continuous attention on population, social development and related issues both from the planning and implementation angles. The Population and Social Development Commission(PSDC) will service the Cabinet Committee on Population and Social Development, headed by the Prime Minister.

(c) Additionally, the Swaminathan Committee report made several other recommednations as well, such as setting up of following structural hierarchy;

(i) A Cabinet Committee on Population and Social Development.

(ii) A Population and Social Development Fund to be administeredby the Population and Social Development Commission, with the following sources of revenue:

(a) Government of India funds;
(b) Bilateral donors;
(c) Foundations, multilateral donors and UN agencies, including UNFPA;
(d) Corporate and cooperative sectors
(e) Voluntary contributions from within the country as well as from non-resident Indians and foreign nationals.

(iii) Each State Cabinet will establish a Committee on Population and Social Development, chaired by the Chief Minister.

(iv) A District Population and Social Development Committee will be constituted at district

levels, by the zilla parishads.

(d) It is not correct to say that no action was taken for 5 years on the Swaminathan Committee Report.Repeated action to process and bring to completion the adoption of a national population policy was continuously in hand.

The Swaminathan Committee Report formed the basis of a series of consultations held with experts, public health professionals, demographers, State Governments and concerned Departments.Immediately after the Swaminathan Committee Report was submitted, two members of the 9 member Committee resigned, and joined the woman activist groups to protest against the `anti women, and anti-poor` report, because the Swaminathan Committee Report did not denounce introduction of high-tech contraceptives, did not denounce the imposition of restrictions on the number of children as qualification criteria for contesting panchayati raj elections, and for debarring those having more than two children in promotions and employment in the organized sector, and besides , also advocated punishment for child marriages. It was noted that some other desirable aspects were either not included or otherwise inadequately emphasized in the Swaminathan Committee Report, such as the need to utilize the Indian Systems of Medicine as a complementary mechanism, and the importance of social marketing for achieving larger coverage and outreach of supplies and equipment.

The Planning Commission suggested a new approach to the National Population Policy.This called for a revision of the Swaminathan Committee Report. Items like identifying and provisioning for the gaps in health infrastructure, as well as meeting the unmet need for contraception were to be included in the revised draft. Other recommendations contained in the Swaminathan Committee Report were not seen as wholly feasible to implement, such as the role of the Cabinet Committee as monitoring the Family Welfare programme, while typically the role of the Cabinet Committee is to take decisions which the concerned Ministers will implement.

During the 50th Anniversary of India independence, there was a Special Session of Parliament, and while the population policy was not discussed, however, several suggestions were made about social development and these concerns were to be reflected.

Consulations were held during 1996-97, and again from 1998 onwards, with experts in the field of sociology, economics and population sciences Several drafts were examined and re-examined. During March 1999, a draft population policy was submitted to Cabinet, and Cabinet constituted a Group of Ministers (GOM) to look into the policy document in the first instance.The GOM had several meetings, including further consultations with experts, demographers and a few State Governments. The draft policy was once again revised and placed before Cabinet for consideration on 19th November, 1999. Cabinet deliberated upon the document at length and asked the Department of Family Welfare to incorporate the suggestions made.

A finalized population policy was considered and approved by the Government on 15.2.2000. The National Population Policy, 2000 was lad on the Table of Lok Sabha on 3rd March, 2000 and in the Rajay Sabha on 7th March, 2000.

The National Population Policy 2000 is based upon consultation with diverse stakeholders.It does not reject or negate the Swaminathan Committee Report, but in fact builds upon and enhances the Swaminathan Committee recommendations.